Dodd Drops Several Libel Charges 5/27/66

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Sen. Thomas J. Dodd (D-Conn.) dropped several major charges of libel against columnists Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson yesterday and reduced his claim for damages from $5 million to $2 million.

His revised complaint abandons all allegations that the columnists libeled him in charging he diverted campaign funds to his personal use and accepted gifts from constituents and Government contractors.

As a result, Dodd's suit for damages is now limited to three claims:

- That Pearson and Anderson conspired with various of the Senator's office employes "to inflict financial and other injury" on Dodd.
- That in six "false and malicious" columns published in January and February the columnists created the impression that Dodd was an "errand boy" for Chicago public relations man Julius Klein, whose clients include West German business and political interests.
- That he was libeled in a March 7 column which claimed that Dodd "acted in co-operation with . . . foreign agent Michael Struelens" in supporting the secession of Katanga from the Congolese government.

These revisions in Dodd's suit against the columnists were made, said the Senator's attorney, John F. Sonnett, in order to expedite the trial of the case.

Sonnett said Dodd wants the trial to begin in July, if possible.

Sonnett began the pretrial proceedings yesterday by taking a deposition from James P. Boyd Jr., a former assistant to Dodd, who supplied information to the columnists about the Senator's affairs.

Boyd will return to Sonnett's office today for further questioning.

Transcripts of the pretrial depositions are to be made available to the public after they have been reviewed by Federal District Judge Alexander Holtzhoff.